

Appendix G- Thoughts For Hymn Paper

Based on Colossians 3:16-17, Vernon M. Whaley in *Understanding Music and Worship in the Local Church*. Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Training Association, 1995. lists six questions for selecting music for worship:

1. Are the lyrics of the composition consistent with the biblical truth?
2. Does the composition teach doctrinal truths and/or biblical principles?
3. Does the composition admonish (warn and encourage)?
4. Does the composition utilize the words of Scripture (a psalm), focus attention on God (a hymn), or emphasize what God is doing in the life of a Spirit-filled believer (a spiritual song)?
5. Does the composition call more attention to its musical style or form of presentation than the lyrics or the melody?
6. Does the composition cause those who play it, sing it, and listen to it to have an inward spirit of thankfulness toward God?

From Larry Roff in *Let Us Sing* on pages 150-151 under “What Kind of Music Does God Like?”

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| 1. Skillful (I Chronicles 25:7) | 4. Creativity |
| 2. Volume (Psalm 33:3) | 5. Participation (Colossians 3:16) |
| 3. Joy (Psalm 33:1) | 6. Motivation (I Corinthians 13) |

The following principles from Jerram Barrs that are to govern all of worship should also be applied to our selection of song in worship:

1. Worship is to be God-centered and God-directed,
2. Worship is to be Christ-focused and redemption-focused,
3. Worship is to be Spirit-led and Spirit-filled,
4. Worship is to be according to Word and filled with Word,
5. Worship must involve the worshipper totally,
6. Worship must embrace every aspect of our life,
7. Worship arises from the community of God’s people,
8. Worship is directed out toward the world and up toward God,
9. Worship must be contemporary and culture specific.

Some further thoughts that relate to song selection specifically:

1. Is the musical expression appropriate to the context?
2. What affect will the musical expression have on the hearers?
3. Is the quality of musical expression good or bad (every style has good and bad music)?
4. Does the song promote and facilitate heart-felt emotion to the glory of God?
5. Are the words faithful to biblical truth?
6. Does the musical expression match the content of the words?
7. Is the congregational song singable (already known by most or fairly easy to learn)?
8. Does the song further a legitimate function in worship (see above)?

Worship Music Evaluation Form

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Song Title: _____

Author/Composer: _____

Part One: The Song’s Words

Preliminary concerns:

- _____ 1. These words are biblically true (doctrinally correct) in every way. (Pass or Fail)

_____ 2. These words are distinctively Christian, either Trinitarian or referencing the atoning work of God in Christ (some mention of grace, mercy, redemption, etc.), or both. For example, it would be awkward to sing this song in a Jewish synagogue. (O.K. or Caution)

A. This song is “about” God (God as the subject of worship)

_____ 3. These words’ subject is about some aspect of God’s character or God’s works that is developed in a consequential way. (No = 0, Somewhat = 10, Yes = 20)

_____ 4. These words evidence a progression of thought, not merely repetition of thought. (No = 0, Somewhat = 5, Yes = 10)

B. This song is “to” God (God as the object of worship)

_____ 5. These words are written with excellence and are a fitting offering to present to God. (No = 0, Somewhat = 10, Yes = 20)

_____ 6. These words, or a portion of these words, are directed to God and not merely about God. (No = 0, Somewhat = 5, Yes = 10)

C. This song helps form Christian character

_____ 7. These words avoid excessive narcissism (self-absorption). They are more about God’s work for us (objective) than our work for or feelings about God (subjective). (No = 0, Somewhat = 5, Yes = 10)

_____ 8. These word’s response of praise, confession, love, etc. (the imperative) is based on relevant and significant truth about God and his works (the indicative). (No = 0, Somewhat = 5, Yes = 10)

D. This song fosters Christian community

_____ 9. These words connect the worshipper with other believers in worship (e.g. using “we” not “I” language). This song would be somewhat awkward sung alone. (No = 0, Somewhat = 5, Yes = 10)

_____ 10. These words connect worshippers with God’s people in other eras and other cultures (the communion of the saints). (No = 0, Somewhat = 5, Yes = 10)

Part Two: The Song’s Music

_____ 1. This music appropriately matches the tone and message of the words. (No = 0, Somewhat = 10, Yes = 20)

_____ 2. This music exhibits excellence in composition and is musically interesting. (No = 0, Somewhat = 10, Yes = 20)

_____ 3. This music offers a variety from the style usually sung, reminding worshippers of the global nature of the church. (No = 0, Somewhat = 10, Yes = 20)

_____ 4. This music is singable, not unnecessarily complex, nor pitched too high or too low. (No = 0, Somewhat = 10, Yes = 20)

_____ 5. This music would be acceptable to most worshippers (would be offensive to few worshippers). (No = 0, Somewhat = 10, Yes = 20)

Numerical Rating

Score for Words _____/100

Score for Music _____/100